

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Policy
Standards, Assessment, and Reporting
Approved 6/9/00

STANDARDS (new)

Purpose. It is the intent of the State Board of Education to strengthen education in Nebraska by providing measurable model academic content standards in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening; mathematics; science; and social studies/history. The model standards should:

- Identify the key content knowledge that students should know and be able to do.
- Clarify expectations for educational achievement of Nebraska public school students.
- Guide development of local curriculum content and assessment procedures.
- Provide frameworks for teachers in determining instructional content, activities, and strategies.

Review Process. To assure continued quality academic standards, future revisions and clarification procedures should:

- Maintain the intent of the current academic content in Nebraska L.E.A.R.N.S.
- Assure clarity and specificity to assist Nebraska schools in continued implementation of local assessments.
- Include review and validation by knowledgeable practitioners and experts for each area of the standards.

It is the responsibility of the State Department of Education to develop a process to guide local districts in reviewing and comparing local standards with state standards. This process should assure that local schools have quality academic content standards that are equal to or more rigorous than the model state standards.

ASSESSMENT *(adapted from State Board policy of 10/1/98)*

Purpose. The State Board of Education believes that the assessment of student academic performance is a local responsibility. The assessment should serve the following major purposes:

- To assist in planning and providing classroom instruction appropriate to student needs.

NEBRASKA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Bylaw and Policy Reference Manual

G_ (Page 1 of 2)
2/07/2003

Nebraska State Board of Education Policy: Assessment Policy

Local Responsibility

The State Board of Education believes that the assessment of student academic performance is a local responsibility. Local assessment serves three major purposes:

- To aid in planning and providing classroom instruction appropriate to student needs;
- To assist in making decisions about placement of students;
- To monitor the progress of students in a program, school, or district.

Although each function is vital, the primary purpose of assessment is to improve instruction and increase learning in the classroom. The results of assessment should be used primarily to judge how well individual students are learning and to modify instruction accordingly.

Since each assessment process or instrument has different strengths, no single one can adequately achieve all of the above purposes. Therefore, multiple assessment processes are necessary to provide information for teachers, parents, and policy makers.

Statewide Role

The State Board of Education believes that all public school districts in Nebraska should participate in an assessment process implemented through the use of multiple validated measures already in use in Nebraska schools. This assessment process should provide information to monitor the progress of public school districts and to assist in making informed decisions.

It is the policy of the State Board of Education to strengthen education in the State of Nebraska by:

1. Clarifying the expectations for educational achievement of students through the establishment of state content standards.
2. Insuring that all students in public schools have a similar opportunity to demonstrate academic achievement and progress in mastering the content standards through an assessment process.
3. Establishing a reporting system so that parents, decision makers, and other citizens have a better opportunity to judge the relative effectiveness of their local public school district in helping students to meet and exceed state content standards.

TITLE 92
CHAPTER 10

004 Curriculum and Standards

004.01 K-12 Curriculum. **Quality Indicator:** The curriculum is comprehensive, coordinated, and sequential and is directed toward locally approved goals and standards for student learning. The instructional program focuses on achievement and provides for the needs of all students including learners with disabilities and high ability learners. It draws upon research, best practice, and reputable theory.

004.01A The instructional program of the school system is based on written purposes or standards and is approved by the local board of education or governing body. These documents are on file in each school building and each certificated staff member is provided a copy.

004.01B By July 1, 2003, each school district either adopts measurable quality academic content standards for reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies/history that are the same as those found in Appendices A through D of this Chapter or adopts local content standards approved by the Commissioner as equal to or exceeding in rigor the standards in Appendices A through D of this Chapter. By July 1, 2003, nonpublic schools have local academic content standards for reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies/history approved by the local governing body.

004.01C Districts electing not to adopt the state academic content standards submit the local academic content standards to the Commissioner for approval as equal to or exceeding in rigor the state standards according to at least one of the following criteria.

004.01C1 The local standards contain the same content organized in a different way.

004.01C2 The local standards include more components of a content area. An example would be mathematic standards that include vectors, which is a component of algebra, which is not covered in Appendices A through D of this Chapter.

004.01C3 The local standards cover more content areas in a subject. An example would be mathematic standards that include the content area of fractals, which is the study of repeated patterns, which is not covered in Appendices A through D of this Chapter.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
POLICY STATEMENT
(Draft August 27, 2007)

STATEWIDE ROLE

The State Board of Education is responsible by Constitution and statute to set policy for the operation of the statewide system of public education. As a policy body, the State Board of Education believes that their leadership in setting policy should result in a statewide system of strong local schools.

The State Board of Education believes that strength in our system of public schools is a partnership between the state and the local leaders. Generally, it is the state that provides overall leadership in terms of policy direction and priority. And, it is the local leadership that provides for the implementation and operation of state policy.

The State Board of Education believes that local initiative, discretion and leadership should be promoted as often as possible and one of the primary responsibilities of the Department of Education is to create and develop the capacity of local leadership to make decisions within the parameters of state policy and in the best interests of the students and communities of the state.

The State Board of Education believes that a strong system of public schools is based on:

- Clear expectations for the educational achievement of students through the establishment of state academic content and performance standards.
- Insuring that all students have equitable opportunities to learn the content and demonstrate the performances that are specified in the standards or stated as other indicators of the desired achievement.
- A system of continuous school improvement at the state, district, school and classroom levels that is informed by data and focused on improving teaching and learning.
- A system of reporting information on student learning so as to engage the public and to support leadership in determination of the strengths of the schools and the needs to be addressed in the improvement of teaching and learning.
- Systematic and continuous professional development for educators and school staff informed by the data from assessment and focused on the improvement of teaching and learning.

- Insuring that systems designed to measure student achievement at the state and local levels are assessment systems that are valid and reliable, based on research evidence and/or sound assessment theory supported by evidence, and are based on sound classroom assessment practices that are designed to inform teaching and learning.
- Using multiple methods of assessing student learning to accurately verify the learning level and capacity of the student and to monitor school performance.
- A unified and integrated system assessment and accountability is used at the local, state and federal level and includes all programs and services.
- Local leadership and initiative that takes responsibility for making decisions that support and enable improvements in teaching and learning.

STANDARDS

Learning standards are statements of what students are to know and be able to do as a result of instruction. The learning standards represent outcomes of instruction that include both critical content that constitutes literacy in the subject or area and learning outcomes such as higher order thinking skills, problem solving skills, the skills of accessing, analyzing, synthesizing and communicating information, and skills of utilizing the capacities of interactive communication technologies to access information, to learn new information and to communicate information and learning.

Learning standards exist to guide instruction and to identify key learning outcomes that are to be the focus of curriculum, instruction and teaching. Learning standards represent the “essential learnings” that are to be mastered by all students.

Learning standards are to be inclusive of the learning and experiences essential to ensure that students are prepared for the next learning sequence, grade level or program. Learning standards are to be inclusive of the learning and experiences designed to ensure that students leave our schools prepared to continue their learning in post-secondary education, to enter the world of work and enter careers that will help them become independent, self sustaining wage earners, and to become contributing members of our democratic society.

Learning standards include the foundational instructional programs of reading/writing, mathematics, science and social studies/history. Essential learnings are statements from the complementary and supporting areas of visual and performing arts, information and communication technologies, career and technical education, health and wellness, world languages, and library and media technology.

The State Board of Education believes that the standards are a partnership with local districts. The state shall adopt standards which are to be used to align local curriculum and instructional programs, guide the development of appropriate assessments of student learning, and be the framework for the public reporting of student achievement. It is further expected that the determination of progress in student achievement be based on the student mastery of the approved standards.

Local standards may be developed and used so long as they are approved by the Department as equal to, or more rigorous than, the state approved standards.

It is expected that each local district, consortia of districts and all accredited/approved private schools engage in the alignment of the local curriculum and instructional programs, Pre K -12, to the approved standards. And, it is expected that each school district and accredited/approved school reports to their respective publics and presents the results of student achievement based on the approved standards.

ASSESSMENT

The State Board of Education believes that assessment of academic performance serves several major purposes:

- Inform the work of teachers and administrators in ensuring that students are mastering the expectations identified in the standards.
- Aid in planning and providing appropriate classroom instruction aligned to the standards and appropriate to student needs.
- Assist in making decisions about placement of students
- Monitor the progress of students in a program, grade level, course, school or school district.
- Report to the public and parents on the achievement of students according to the expectations of the approved standards.
- Provide the data to be used for continuous review and improvement of improving teaching and learning.
- Engage students in monitoring their own progress and taking responsibility for their own learning.

Although each purpose and function is vital, the primary purpose of assessment is to improve instruction and to increase learning in the classroom. The results of assessments should be used primarily to judge how well individual students are learning and to modify instruction accordingly.

Since any single assessment instrument has its unique strengths and weaknesses and each instrument is unique to the type of learning that is measured, the State Board supports the use of multiple measures to determine the level at which the student is learning as the means of confirming that not only has learning occurred but to what extent, depth or level.

The State Board of Education believes that assessment is a state-local partnership with each party assuming appropriate roles. The local schools are best able to define assessments that align to the standards and align to the curriculum that is taught. The local schools assessments should also provide information to the teacher on a regular basis to keep students progressing in their efforts to master the content and performances specified in the learning standards.

The state is responsible to ensure that the local assessments are valid and reliable and shall determine the criteria and process for review of each district's assessments. The state shall determine the qualitative criteria for sound assessment based on the research and best practice defined by experts in the field of assessment. And, the state shall provide for a review process by local, state and national experts in the field of assessment.

The state shall also conduct studies to:

- determine the validity of the assessments and scoring
- determine the confidence with which scores can be used to determine individual and school/district performance
- determine the level of confidence that students' results are consistent across districts and statewide.

In addition, the state will conduct regular implementation studies to:

- determine the extent of implementation of local assessments
- determine the concerns of teachers and administrators in achieving full implementation
- evaluate the effectiveness of the support for implementation received from the state level, regional level and local districts level.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability includes both the public reporting of data about the performance of students and the steps taken at the local and state level to cause the performance to improve. The State Board of Education believes that the public reporting of student achievement to the local and statewide community is critical to the quality of education in Nebraska.

The public reporting of student performance information is designed to:

- Provide accountability to the public about how well schools are doing in terms of the achievement of their students
- To assist local and state policymakers in determining local and statewide needs to address areas of low performance.
- Support local and statewide planning and efforts in continuous school improvement.

The state shall design a consistent framework for the reporting of school and district information. Schools and districts may report more data and information than is required and are encouraged to do so.

The state shall implement a statewide student and staff reporting system designed to provide for electronic collection of data, warehousing of data and the ability to aggregate information into reports for local, state and federal purposes. The system will collect data at the individual student and staff levels. In addition, the system should allow for the capacity to review the information from multiple districts/schools to conduct policy analysis and information gathering.

STARS ASSESSMENTS AND LB653

It is the intent of the State Board of Education that LB653 will enhance STARS assessments and serve as a complement to STARS in the total system of measuring student achievement.

LB653 calls for:

- new and revised standards in reading/writing, mathematics, science and social studies/history
- grade level proficiency expectations/descriptors
- performance assessments in mathematics and reading that are to “mirror” the current statewide writing performance assessment.

It is the intent of the Department to determine mathematics and reading assessments in the three grades to be prescribed by the Board and to design them to reflect the key elements of the statewide writing assessment:

- Performance based
- Statewide scoring
- Reporting of performance on at least four levels
- Clear criteria for scoring and performance determination
- Professional development linked to instruction

The implementation of statewide performance measures in mathematics and reading should complement the existing STARS assessments and should provide an additional measure of validation of STARS proficiency percentages.

The implementation of STARS and integration of LB 653 shall consider the compliance requirements of No Child Left Behind so that the same system of assessment and accountability is used for local, state and federal purposes.

LB 1157

LB 1157

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA

ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 1157

FINAL READING

Introduced by Raikes, 25.

Read first time January 23, 2008

Committee: Education

A BILL

1 FOR AN ACT relating to education; to amend sections 79-758,
2 79-760.01, 79-760.02, 79-760.03, and 79-760.05, Revised
3 Statutes Supplement, 2007; to change provisions relating
4 to statewide assessment and reporting; and to repeal the
5 original sections.
6 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 79-758, Revised Statutes Supplement,
2 2007, is amended to read:

3 79-758 For purposes of the Quality Education
4 Accountability Act:

5 (1) Assessment means the process of measuring student
6 achievement and progress on state and ~~locally~~ adopted state-adopted
7 standards;

8 (2) Assessment instrument means a test aligned with state
9 and ~~local~~ standards that is designed to measure student progress
10 and achievement; and

11 ~~(3)~~ Assessment portfolio means the compilation of
12 assessment practices and procedures, assessment instruments, and
13 national assessment instruments used by a school district in
14 meeting assessment and reporting requirements; and

15 ~~(4)~~ (3) National assessment instrument means a nationally
16 norm-referenced test developed and scored by a national testing
17 service.

18 Sec. 2. Section 79-760.01, Revised Statutes Supplement,
19 2007, is amended to read:

20 79-760.01 The State Board of Education shall adopt
21 measurable ~~model~~ academic content standards for at least ~~three~~
22 the grade levels required for statewide assessment pursuant to
23 section 79-760.03. The standards shall cover the subject areas of
24 reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. The
25 standards adopted shall be sufficiently clear and measurable to be

1 used for testing student performance with respect to mastery of
2 the content described in the state standards. The State Board of
3 Education shall develop a plan to review and update standards for
4 each subject area every five years. The state board shall review
5 and update the standards in reading by July 1, 2009, the standards
6 in mathematics by July 1, 2010, and the standards in all other
7 subject areas by July 1, 2013. The state board plan shall include a
8 review of commonly accepted standards adopted by school districts.

9 Sec. 3. Section 79-760.02, Revised Statutes Supplement,
10 2007, is amended to read:

11 79-760.02 In accordance with timelines that are adopted
12 by the State Board of Education, but in no event later than one
13 year following the adoption or modification of state standards,
14 each school district shall adopt measurable quality academic
15 content standards in the subject areas of reading, writing,
16 mathematics, science, and social studies. The standards may be
17 the same as, or may be equal to or exceed in rigor, the measurable
18 model academic content standards adopted by the state board and
19 shall cover at least the same grade levels. School districts
20 may work collaboratively with educational service units, with
21 learning communities, or through interlocal agreements to develop
22 such standards. Educational service units and learning communities
23 shall develop a composite set of standards shared by member school
24 districts. The State Department of Education shall adopt and
25 promulgate appropriate rules and regulations to insure the rigor of

1 the measurable quality academic content standards.

2 Sec. 4. Section 79-760.03, Revised Statutes Supplement,
3 2007, is amended to read:

4 79-760.03 (1) For school year 2009-10 and each school
5 year thereafter, the State Board of Education shall implement
6 a statewide system for the assessment of student learning and
7 for reporting the performance of school districts and learning
8 communities pursuant to this section. The assessment and reporting
9 system shall measure student knowledge of subject matter materials
10 covered by measurable academic content standards selected by the
11 state board.

12 (2) The state board shall adopt a plan for an assessment
13 and reporting system and implement and maintain the assessment
14 and reporting system according to such plan. The plan shall be
15 submitted annually to the State Department of Education, the
16 Governor, the chairperson of the Education Committee of the
17 Legislature, and the Clerk of the Legislature. The state board
18 shall select three grade levels for assessment and reporting
19 required pursuant to subsections (4) through (7) of this section.

20 The purposes of the system are to:

21 (a) Determine how well public schools are performing in
22 terms of achievement of public school students related to the state
23 academic content standards;

24 (b) Report the performance of public schools based upon
25 the results of state assessment instruments and national assessment

1 instruments;

2 (c) Provide information for the public and policymakers
3 on the performance of public schools; and

4 (d) Provide for the comparison among Nebraska public
5 schools and the comparison of Nebraska public schools to public
6 schools elsewhere.

7 (3) The Governor shall appoint a technical advisory
8 committee to review the statewide assessment plan and state
9 assessment instruments developed under the Quality Education
10 Accountability Act. The technical advisory committee shall consist
11 of three nationally recognized experts in educational assessment
12 and measurement, one administrator from a school in Nebraska, and
13 one teacher from a school in Nebraska. The members shall serve
14 terms of three years, except that two of the members shall be
15 appointed for initial terms of two years. Any vacancy shall be
16 filled by the Governor for the remainder of the term. One of
17 the members shall be designated as chairperson by the Governor.
18 Members shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses
19 as provided in sections 81-1174 to 81-1177. The committee shall
20 advise the Governor, the state board, and the State Department of
21 Education on the development of statewide assessment instruments
22 and the statewide assessment plan. The appointments to the
23 committee shall be confirmed by the Legislature.

24 ~~(3)~~ (4) The state board shall prescribe a statewide
25 assessment of writing that relies on writing samples in each of

1 three grades selected by the state board. Each year at least one
2 of the three selected grades shall participate in the statewide
3 writing assessment with each selected grade level participating at
4 least once every three years.

5 ~~(4)~~ (5) For school year 2009-10 and for each school
6 year thereafter, the state board shall prescribe a statewide
7 assessment of reading that is based on model assessments developed
8 pursuant to section 79-760. The reading assessment instruments
9 shall be developed in collaboration with educational service units
10 and be approved by a majority of the educational service unit
11 administrators. The statewide assessment of reading shall include
12 assessment instruments for each of the grade levels three through
13 eight and for one grade in high school and standards selected
14 adopted by the state board pursuant to section 79-760.01.

15 ~~(5)~~ (6) For no later than school year 2010-11 and for
16 each school year thereafter, the state board shall prescribe
17 a statewide assessment of mathematics that is based on model
18 assessments developed pursuant to section 79-760. The mathematics
19 assessment instruments shall be developed in collaboration with
20 educational service units and be approved by a majority of the
21 educational service unit administrators. The statewide assessment
22 of mathematics shall include assessment instruments for each of
23 the grade levels three through eight and for one grade in high
24 school and standards selected adopted by the state board pursuant
25 to section 79-760.01. If no statewide assessment of mathematics

1 is administered in school year 2009-10, school districts shall
2 report mathematics assessment results in the same manner as such
3 information was reported in school year 2008-09.

4 ~~(6) School districts shall develop assessment portfolios.~~
5 Such assessment portfolios may be developed through school
6 district collaboration with educational service units and learning
7 communities or through interlocal agreements. Educational service
8 units shall conduct a peer review of local district assessments
9 annually. Educational service units shall submit documentation
10 of the district portfolios for review by the State Department
11 of Education not more than once every three years. Assessment
12 portfolios shall include all assessment instruments required by the
13 state board and by the Quality Education Accountability Act.

14 ~~(7) The department shall identify criteria for rating~~
15 ~~assessment instruments and assessment portfolios. The department~~
16 ~~shall establish statewide minimum proficiency levels for local~~
17 ~~assessments and shall include proficiency levels in the rating of~~
18 ~~assessment instruments and assessment portfolios. The department~~
19 ~~shall contract with independent, recognized assessment experts~~
20 ~~to review and rate locally developed assessment instruments and~~
21 ~~portfolios according to such criteria and proficiency levels.~~

22 (7) For no later than school year 2011-12 and each
23 school year thereafter, the state board shall prescribe a statewide
24 assessment of science. The statewide assessment of science shall
25 include assessment instruments for each of the grade levels

1 selected by the state board and standards adopted by the state
2 board pursuant to section 79-760.01. The grade levels shall include
3 at least one grade in elementary school, one grade in middle school
4 or junior high school, and one grade in high school.

5 (8) The department shall conduct studies to verify the
6 technical quality of assessment instruments and demonstrate the
7 comparability of assessment instrument results required by the
8 Quality Education Accountability Act, act. The department shall
9 annually report such findings to the Governor, the Legislature, and
10 the State Board of Education, state board.

11 (9) The State Board of Education state board shall
12 recommend national assessment instruments for the purpose of
13 national comparison. Each school district shall include national
14 assessment instruments in its assessment portfolio, report
15 individual student data for scores and sub-scores according to
16 procedures established by the state board and the department
17 pursuant to section 79-760.05.

18 (10) The aggregate results of assessment instruments
19 and national assessment instruments shall be reported by the
20 district on a building basis to the public in that district, to
21 the learning community coordinating council if such district is
22 a member of a learning community, and to the department. Each
23 learning community shall also report the aggregate results of
24 any assessment instruments and national assessment instruments to
25 the public in that learning community and to the department. The

1 department shall report the aggregate results of any assessment
2 instruments and national assessment instruments on a learning
3 community, district, and building basis as part of the statewide
4 assessment and reporting system.

5 (11) (a) The assessment and reporting plan shall:

6 (i) Provide for the confidentiality of the results of
7 individual students; and

8 (ii) Include all public schools and all public school
9 students.

10 (b) The state board shall adopt criteria for the
11 inclusion of students with disabilities, students entering the
12 school for the first time, and students with limited English
13 proficiency.

14 The department may determine appropriate accommodations
15 for the assessment of students with disabilities or any student
16 receiving special education programs and services pursuant
17 to section 79-1139. Alternate academic achievement standards
18 in reading, mathematics, and science and alternate assessment
19 instruments aligned with the standards may be among the
20 accommodations for students with severe cognitive disabilities.

21 (12) The state board may select additional grade levels
22 and additional subject areas for statewide assessment instruments
23 to comply with federal requirements.

24 (13) The state board shall not require school districts
25 to administer assessments or assessment instruments other than as

1 prescribed by the act.

2 (14) The state board shall appoint committees of
3 teachers, from each appropriate subject area, and administrators
4 to assist in the development of statewide assessment instruments
5 required by the act.

6 Sec. 5. Section 79-760.05, Revised Statutes Supplement,
7 2007, is amended to read:

8 79-760.05 (1) The State Board of Education shall
9 implement a statewide system for tracking individual student
10 achievement, using the student identifier system of the State
11 Department of Education, that can be aggregated to track student
12 progress by demographic characteristics, including, but not
13 limited to, race, poverty, high mobility, attendance, and limited
14 English proficiency, on available measures of student achievement
15 which include, but need not be limited to, national assessment
16 instruments, and state assessment instruments. ~~local assessment~~
17 ~~instruments, and other similar measures.~~ Such a system shall be
18 designed so as to aggregate student data by available educational
19 input characteristics, which may include class size, teacher
20 education, teacher experience, special education, early childhood
21 programs, federal programs, and other targeted education programs.
22 School districts shall provide the department with individual
23 student achievement data as requested from assessment instruments
24 required pursuant to section 79-760.03 in order to implement the
25 statewide system.

1 (2) The department and the coordinator appointed pursuant
2 to section 79-11,150 shall annually analyze and report on student
3 achievement for the state, each school district, and each learning
4 community aggregated by the demographic characteristics described
5 in subsection (1) of this section. The department shall report
6 the findings to the Governor, the Legislature, school districts,
7 educational service units, and each learning community. Such
8 analysis shall include aggregated data that would indicate
9 differences in achievement due to available educational input
10 characteristics described in subsection (1) of this section.
11 Such analysis shall include indicators of progress toward state
12 achievement goals for students in poverty, limited English
13 proficient students, and highly mobile students according to the
14 plan developed by the coordinator pursuant to section 79-11,150.

15 Sec. 6. Original sections 79-758, 79-760.01, 79-760.02,
16 79-760.03, and 79-760.05, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2007, are
17 repealed.